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26 May 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT: United States Cold War Policy.

REFERENCE: The NSC Staff Paper dated 19 May, 1952, entitled "U. S. Objectives and Programs for National Security (Preliminary reappraisal of NSC 68 and 114 Policies)".

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1. Pursuant to the several discussions between the Director, [REDACTED] and the undersigned of the reference paper, this memorandum of comment and recommendation is being submitted for the consideration of the NSC Staff.

2. It is not clear what the purpose and significance of the subject paper are. From the parenthetical portion of its title, the paper would appear to be a tentative reappraisal of the policies laid down in NSC 68 and 114; and if this is what the paper amounts to and no more, it could be accepted as a useful and desirable re-examination of the factual basis upon which these policies are rested. If, on the other hand, it is designed as an announcement of a new policy or set of policies, or as the basis for the development of definitive and authoritative revisions of the existing policies, then there are a number of questionable and disturbing aspects which would warrant most careful study before adoption.

3. The paper, even in its present and incomplete form, serves a useful purpose in questioning the validity of some of the more important assumptions which underlie NSC 68 and 114. The disappointing results of the rearmament effort and other weaknesses in the Free World power position are taken into account and a note of realism is injected in the portions of the paper which discuss "what the traffic will bear". Moreover, at the outset the paper contains a clear and compelling analysis of the nature and extent of the menace with which the Free World is confronted in the continuing hostility and the aggressively expansionist design of the Soviet regime. However, in terms of stating what is to be done about the problem or indicating any very clear-cut or satisfactory lines of approach, the paper leaves matters up in the air to an extent which is more

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apt to create confusion than to provide clarification. In its present form the paper could actually serve as justification for any one of several widely-divergent national policies. At certain points there is an inference to be drawn that a preventive war is the only way out (Page 15, paragraph 17; Page 45, paragraph 56; and Page 60, paragraph 76), but the chief and probably most seriously recommended course of action seems to be that we should endeavor to continue along the present lines of essentially defensive containment -- even though this course is indicated as unsatisfactory and unlikely (barring great good luck) to bring us out of our present predicament. (Page 62, paragraph 82; Page 63, paragraph 87.)

4. The possibilities of political warfare (broadly defined to include psychological warfare, subversion, political and economic pressure, diplomatic action, etc.) are canvassed and extensively discussed, but are discounted and found to be of insufficient utility to warrant a vote of confidence (Page 16, paragraph 17; Page 60, paragraph 77). This conclusion is somewhat strange in view of the great and even over-riding significance which is attached to the same methods in the evaluation of the Soviet menace and over-all potential. Cold war methods are indicated as the chief Soviet approach and the one most likely to be continued by them; the Soviet armed forces are not regarded as the primary instrument by which the Russians will seek to bring the Free World under their control (Page 36, paragraph 44).⁷ But of even greater immediate concern to this Agency which is charged with a portion of responsibility within the political warfare field, is the fact that the paper does not contain any indication that this country should take vigorous and aggressive measures against the enemy within this area. There is even an inference that we may be increasingly prohibited from engaging in such activities, because of the risks which the "forward" or "positive" aspects of the old, old containment strategy entail (Page 56, paragraph 70; Page 62, paragraph 84). Another confusing feature of the appraisal of political warfare and, later on, economic warfare is the conclusion that taken alone this one or that one would probably not suffice to achieve important results. It has never been supposed that any single series of measures would be sufficient, but rather that taken altogether and in conjunction with all of our own and our associates' efforts to build up strength -- real results could be expected and should in any case be seriously striven for.

5. If the foregoing brief analysis of this paper is accurate and if we are faced, as the only acceptable alternative, with a continuation of our tenuous and uncertain efforts to create

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situations of strength while maintaining a basically defensive posture, it might not be amiss to suggest that something needs to be done to push the enemy off balance and keep him there. Measures calculated to reduce the enemy's freedom of decision and action should be vigorously pursued and he should not be left with a free choice of the timing and location for the creation of more mischief for our side, for otherwise it becomes too easy a matter for him to start more conflagrations than we can put out. There is in the paper an impressive recital of Russian vulnerabilities to political and economic warfare attack, and to these others might be added. Because of all these considerations, and on the theory that a good defense requires some offensive features, it is recommended that more thought be given to certain categories of affirmative action and to the allocation of sufficient resources and effort to these in order that they may be given the best chance of success.

6. There is in progress at the present moment a review by a special panel of the PSB (headed by Admiral Stevens) of the programs and measures generally within the NSC 10/5 area, which would be most effective. The approach of that working group is to single out a limited number of programs which stand up best under the tests of effectiveness, feasibility and freedom from unacceptable risk, with a view to recommending these programs for more concentrated study and refinement than has heretofore been possible. Emphasis will be placed upon keeping the recommendations for top-priority action to a relatively small number, avoiding the dispersion of effort and calling for the concentration of resources in support of those programs which are accepted. It is recommended that the reference paper not be finalized prior to the consideration by the NSC Staff of the proposals and recommendations of the Stevens group.

FRANK G. WISNER

cc: DCI
DD/I ✓
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